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E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/26/2011

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SUBJECT: DEALING WITH ROBERT MUGABE, THE CONSUMMATE  
SURVIVOR

CLASSIFIED BY CHARGE D'AFFAIRES EARL M. IRVING FOR  
REASONS 1.5 (B) AND (D).

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SUMMARY  
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1. (C) OVER THE NEXT YEAR, PRESIDENT MUGABE WILL FACE HIS GREATEST CHALLENGE IN 20 YEARS TO STAYING IN POWER. A PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, IN WHICH MUGABE INTENDS TO RUN, IS SLATED FOR EARLY 2002. HE MUST CONTEND WITH A SIZABLE AND RELATIVELY UNIFIED POLITICAL OPPOSITION, A COSTLY AND UNPOPULAR INTERVENTION IN THE CONGO, MALCONTENTS IN HIS RULING PARTY, AND HIS OWN PLUMMETING POPULARITY ACROSS ZIMBABWE. MUGABE IS INTRANSIGENT, HOWEVER, AND WILL USE ALMOST ANY MEANS NECESSARY, INCLUDING WIDESPREAD VIOLENCE, TO ENSURE HIS CONTINUED GRIP ON THE COUNTRY. THE PRESIDENT APPEARS WILLING TO SACRIFICE THE ECONOMY IN ORDER TO PURSUE HIS LAND RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM -- THE ONLY CREDIBLE PLATFORM THE RULING PARTY HAS LEFT -- AND PUNISH HIS ENEMIES, PARTICULARLY WHITE FARMERS. THE PRESIDENT'S HENCHMEN HAVE ATTACKED AND ATTEMPTED TO UNDERMINE EVERY SEGMENT OF SOCIETY, INCLUDING THE INDEPENDENT JUDICIARY AND THE MEDIA, THAT APPEARS OPPOSED TO HIS POLICIES. THE PRESIDENT DOES NOT REACT WELL TO INTERNATIONAL CRITICISM, SO ANY ATTEMPT TO INFLUENCE OR MODERATE HIS THINKING SHOULD BE PUT IN TERMS OF BENEFITS TO HIS

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CONTINUED RULE AND SHOULD INVOLVE THE REGIONAL LEADERS TO WHOM HE STILL LISTENS. U.S. INTERESTS LIE IN BOLSTERING THE DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS THAT ARE UNDER SIEGE AND PREVENTING BOTH A SOCIAL EXPLOSION AND ECONOMIC IMPLOSION THAT WOULD HAVE SERIOUS REGIONAL IMPLICATIONS. ZIMBABWE, WITH ITS DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS, RESILIENT MARKET ECONOMY AND INDUSTRIAL BASE, RESPECTED JUDICIARY, AND THE BEST-EDUCATED WORK FORCE IN AFRICA, MATTERS AND MERITS OUR TIMELY AND CREATIVE INTERVENTION IN ORDER TO PRESERVE THESE. END SUMMARY.

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A PITCHED BATTLE  
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2. (C) 2001 WILL BE A CRITICAL YEAR FOR ZIMBABWE AS THE COUNTRY'S TWO POLITICAL PARTIES SQUARE OFF TO WAGE WHAT PROMISES TO BE A PITCHED BATTLE TO SECURE THE PRESIDENCY IN 2002. ALTHOUGH NOT FORMALLY CONFIRMED, ROBERT MUGABE ALMOST CERTAINLY WILL BE THE CANDIDATE FOR THE RULING ZANU-PF AND MORGAN TSVANGIRAI WILL HEAD UP THE OPPOSITION MOVEMENT FOR DEMOCRATIC CHANGE (MDC) TICKET.

AT THIS WRITING THERE IS ONE TRUISM IN ZIMBABWEAN POLITICS: ZANU-PF CANNOT WIN ON A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD. A HELEN SUZMAN FOUNDATION POLL RELEASED IN OCTOBER 2000 SHOWED SUPPORT FOR MUGABE AT ITS LOWEST POST-INDEPENDENCE EBB, PROVIDING A NATIONAL SUPPORT RATING OF ONLY 13 PERCENT, WITH A 6 PERCENT URBAN AND 17 PERCENT RURAL SPLIT.

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13. (C) THE ZIMBABWEAN PRESIDENT IS SUSPICIOUS OF AND DOES NOT FULLY EMBRACE THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS, PARTICULARLY AS IT RELATES TO THE TRANSFER OF POWER. HE IS A VENGEFUL SURVIVOR, HAVING MANAGED TO GET THROUGH A PROTRACTED LIBERATION STRUGGLE DURING THE 1960S AND 1970S, A CIVIL WAR IN THE EARLY 1980S AND TWO MAJOR POLITICAL DEFEATS IN THE LAST YEAR. AT THE DECEMBER 2000 ZANU-PF CONGRESS, HE NEUTRALIZED ANY OPPOSITION TO HIS CONTINUED ROLE AS LEADER OF THE PARTY, AND THOSE OPPONENTS WHOM HE WAS UNABLE TO CO-OPT (SUCH AS FORMER MINISTER EDDISON ZVOBGO) WERE RELEGATED TO THE POLITICAL WILDERNESS. WE CREDIT THE SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT, EMMERSON MNANGAGWA, WHO WAS PROMOTED TO THE FOURTH-HIGHEST POST IN THE RULING PARTY AFTER MUGABE, HIS TWO VICE PRESIDENTS (BOTH CO-EQUALS) AND PARTY CHAIRMAN JOHN NKOMO WITH CONDUCTING THE PARTY PURGES. IN THE OFFING MUGABE SUCCEEDED IN CONSOLIDATING HIS BASES, PLACING LOYAL SUPPORTERS IN KEY POSITIONS, IN ANTICIPATION OF AN EVENTUAL TAKEOVER. MUGABE AND MNANGAGWA'S FATES ARE INTERTWINED AND, FOR THE TIME BEING, THE PRESIDENT IS ENSURED UNSWERVING SUPPORT OF HIS POLITICAL PROGRAM AND AGENDA REGARDLESS OF ITS MERITS, VICIOUSNESS OR

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ANCILLARY CONSEQUENCES. MUGABE'S CABINET IS ALSO COMPLETELY EMASCULATED. THOSE WHO ARE WILLING TO OFFER THOUGHTS CONTRARY TO THE PRESIDENT'S PLANS HAVE BEEN OVERRULED OR BANISHED. THERE IS NO "MODERATE WING" OR "INTELLECTUAL WING" OF ZANU-PF THAT IS IN A POSITION TO CHECK THE PRESIDENT'S BEHAVIOR.

14. (C) EDDISON ZVOBGO, RECENTLY DEPOSED FROM ZANU-PF'S POLITBURO, TOLD US JANUARY 4 THAT HE SEES NO WAY THAT HIS PARTY CAN WIN WITH MUGABE AS ITS STANDARD BEARER IN THE FEBRUARY OR MARCH 2002 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION. MATABELELAND IS "IRRETRIEVABLY LOST" TO THE MDC, AND THE HEAVILY POPULATED MAJOR URBAN AREAS, WHERE HE EXPECTS A MASSIVE TURNOUT OF VOTERS, ALMOST CERTAINLY WILL GO TO THE MDC AS WELL. HE THINKS MANICALAND AND EVEN MASVINGO, HIS OWN PROVINCE, WILL GO TO THE MDC. AN ELECTION HELD DURING THE RAINY SEASON IN THE RURAL AREAS OF MASHONALAND -- ZANU-PF'S CORE AREA OF SUPPORT -- WILL BE MARKED BY A LOW TURNOUT, BECAUSE THE INFRASTRUCTURE WILL HAVE BEEN FLOODED OR WASHED OUT. INTERESTINGLY,

ZVOBGO THOUGHT THAT THE LEVELS OF VIOLENCE THAT ZANU-PF WOULD HAVE TO DEPLOY IN ORDER TO COW THE POPULATION INTO VOTING OVERWHELMINGLY FOR ZANU-PF WOULD HAVE TO BE SO GREAT AS TO BE UNACCEPTABLE.

15. (C) WE HAVE BEEN PICKING UP RUMORS THAT THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS MAY BE HELD SOONER, POSSIBLY AS EARLY AS AUGUST OR SEPTEMBER, AS A SNAP ELECTION THAT  
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CATCHES THE MDC OFF GUARD INCREASES THE CHANCES OF A ZANU-PF VICTORY. THAT THIS MAY BE ILLEGAL UNDER THE CONSTITUTION WILL, IN OUR OPINION, NOT DETER MUGABE FROM SUCH AN ACT IF HE SEES THE EARLIER TIMING AS TO HIS ADVANTAGE. ZVOBGO ORIGINALLY SUGGESTED -- AND WAS OVERRULED -- THAT MUGABE RESIGN AND CALL A SNAP ELECTION IN OCTOBER TO HEAD OFF THE OBSTACLE OF LIKELY FOOD SHORTAGES AND THROW THE OPPOSITION OFF BALANCE. (NOTE: MDC PARLIAMENTARIAN DAVID COLTART, WHO IS ALSO A PROMINENT ATTORNEY, TOLD US ON JANUARY 24 THAT THE ELECTION MUST BE HELD BETWEEN JANUARY 1 AND MARCH 31, 2002. END NOTE). OBSERVERS HERE PREDICT SHORTAGES OF STAPLES SUCH AS MAIZE AND WHEAT BY YEAR'S END. WITH ALL ALLOWANCES FOR MUDDLED MAOIST MINDS, IT SHOULD BE GRANTED THAT THE MEN LEADING ZANU-PF ARE NOT FOOLS: THEY WOULD NOT WANT MUGABE TO RUN FOR PRESIDENT DURING WHAT COULD BE THE EARLY STAGES OF A POSSIBLE FOOD SECURITY CRISIS.

16. (C) THE RULING PARTY'S BRUTAL MACHINATIONS IN THE RUN-UP TO THE BY-ELECTIONS IN BIKITA AND MARONDERA DEMONSTRATE THAT RETAINING CONTROL BY ANY MEANS IS A STANDING ORDER. VIOLENCE, INTIMIDATION AND BLATANT BRIBERY AND COERCION OF THE ELECTORATE ARE OCCURRING WITH LITTLE ATTENTION PAID TO APPEARANCES. WRESTING THE BIKITA SEAT AWAY FROM THE MDC WAS ALL THAT MATTERED, AND IF THOSE IN CABINET FELT ANY REMORSE, WE SAW NO EVIDENCE OF IT. THIS INCREASINGLY FREQUENT SUSPENSION OF THE RULE OF LAW IS A PARTICULARLY WORRISOME TREND AS IT WEAKENS THE VERY FOUNDATIONS OF THE NATION. WE FEAR THAT THIS GROWING CULTURE OF VIOLENCE IS BEGINNING TO  
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INFECT THE OPPOSITION, WHICH, UNTIL NOW, HAS MAINTAINED THE MORAL HIGH GROUND AND BACKED AWAY FROM CONFRONTATION.

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THE ECONOMY SUFFERS  
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17. (C) IT IS ALSO DIFFICULT TO SEE HOW MUGABE CAN ARREST THE COUNTRY'S WORSENING ECONOMY GIVEN HIS NON-NEGOTIABLE POLITICAL GOALS OF GIVING LAND TO THE PEOPLE AND STAYING IN POWER. IN THIS AREA ZVOBGO FRANKLY ADMITTED THAT THE CURRENT LEADERSHIP HAS ITS PRIORITIES ALL WRONG, CITING THE POLITBURO'S LOW RANKING ON ITS PRIORITY LIST OF RENEWED TIES WITH THE MULTILATERAL LENDERS. WE MUST NOT FORGET THAT MUGABE ONCE REFERRED TO THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND AS A "MONSTER." MUGABE APPEARS PERFECTLY WILLING TO SINK THE ECONOMY IN ORDER TO BRING HIS LAND PROGRAM TO PASS. IT APPEARS THAT NO AMOUNT OF REASONING OR STRENGTH OF ARGUMENT WILL DISSUADE HIM FROM PURSUING THE CURRENT "ACCELERATED" LAND RESETTLEMENT EXERCISE, FROM WHICH VIRTUALLY ALL THE

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PRINCIPAL DONORS HAVE WITHDRAWN FINANCIAL SUPPORT. THE  
PRESIDENT'S APPROACH HAS BEEN TO RESETTLE POOR,  
UNTRAINED AND UNEQUIPPED SUBSISTENCE FARMERS ON  
COMMERCIAL FARMS WITH A SELECTIVE REGARD FOR LEGALITIES.  
EXPLORATORY EFFORTS LED BY UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT  
PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR, MARK MALLOCH-BROWN, TO BRIDGE THE  
GAP BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION AND THAT OF THE  
DONORS HAVE BORNE LITTLE FRUIT TO DATE.

18. (C) MUGABE HAS BEEN THE MAIN BENEFICIARY OF THE LAND  
RESETTLEMENT EXERCISE, BECAUSE IT HAS GIVEN HIM THE  
PRETEXT TO PUNISH HIS ENEMIES, NAMELY THE WHITE  
COMMERCIAL FARMERS WHOM HE PERCEIVES AS BANKROLLING THE  
OPPOSITION MDC. LAST YEAR BEFORE THE PARLIAMENTARY  
ELECTIONS, HE LABELED ZIMBABWE'S WHITES -- LESS THAN ONE  
HALF PERCENT OF THE POPULATION -- AS "ENEMIES OF THE  
STATE." HIS TACTICS INCLUDE USING TARGETED, LOW-  
INTENSITY VIOLENCE AGAINST THE COMMERCIAL FARMING SECTOR  
IN ORDER TO FORCE THE MEMBERS OF THIS HERETOFORE  
PRIVILEGED AND WEALTHY GROUP TO ABANDON THEIR ASSETS AND  
NATIONALITY. OBSERVERS HERE TELL US THAT THE COMMERCIAL  
FARMERS BROKE THE GENTLEMEN'S AGREEMENT IN WHICH ZANU-PF  
WOULD ALLOW THEM TO PROSPER AND FEED THE COUNTRY IN  
EXCHANGE FOR THEIR STAYING OUT OF POLITICS, WHEN MEMBERS  
OF THE COMMERCIAL FARMERS UNION WERE FILMED SIGNING  
CHECKS FOR THE MDC'S WAR CHEST. NOW ANYTHING GOES, AND  
MUGABE AND THE RULING PARTY WILL CONTINUE TO KEEP UP THE  
PRESSURE AND DEMONIZE THE FARMERS UNTIL HIS BID FOR A  
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RENEWED LEADERSHIP MANDATE IS SUCCESSFUL.

19. (C) THE FATE OF ETHNIC MINORITIES, URBAN DWELLERS  
AND THE FORMAL ECONOMY DO NOT APPEAR TO BE CONCERNS OF  
MUGABE'S NUMINOUS VISION FOR THE COUNTRY. CAPITALISTS  
HAVE RESPONDED TO THIS DISREGARD, IF NOT OUTRIGHT  
HOSTILITY, EITHER BY MOTHBALLING THEIR FIRMS OR  
DISINVESTING OUTRIGHT. IF THE ZIMBABWEAN ECONOMY  
CONTINUES TO DETERIORATE AT ITS CURRENT RAPID PACE, THE  
CONSEQUENCES FOR THIS COUNTRY AND THE REGION WILL BE  
DEVASTATING.

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MUGABE WILL NOT BE PUSHED OFF THE SCENE  
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110. (C) MUGABE WILL NOT GO GENTLY INTO THAT GOOD NIGHT  
OF RETIREMENT. WE SERIOUSLY DOUBT THAT IT IS POSSIBLE TO  
CONVINCE HIM TO DO SO. EVEN IF WE WERE ABLE TO SCRAPE  
TOGETHER THE CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF MONEY TO FINANCE A  
GENEROUS "GOLDEN PARACHUTE" FOR HIM TO LEAVE THE SCENE,  
WE DO NOT THINK MUGABE WOULD FULFILL THE TERMS OF THE  
BARGAIN. NOR, IN OUR OPINION, IN HIS TIME LEFT ON STAGE  
WILL HE LISTEN TO OR HEED WELL-INTENTIONED ADVICE COMING  
FROM THOSE HE DOES NOT CONSIDER ABSOLUTE BACKERS. FOR  
THOSE WITH LESS THAN WHOLEHEARTED SUPPORT, THE BEST WAY  
TO MAKE MUGABE LISTEN IS TO APPEAL TO HIS DESIRE TO STAY  
IN POWER. HE WILL AT LEAST CONSIDER ANY PROPOSAL THAT  
IS COUCHED IN TERMS OF PROLONGING HIS POLITICAL  
SURVIVAL. TRUE TO THEIR SELF-INTEREST, THE DEFENSE  
FORCES WILL CONTINUE THEIR UNWAVERING AND OBSEQUIOUS  
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ALLEGIANCE TO MUGABE. OFFERING STRATEGIES GROUNDED IN  
MAINTAINING REGIME SECURITY, THE SENIOR MILITARY  
LEADERSHIP REMAINS FOCUSED ON PERSONAL ECONOMIC  
ENRICHMENT RATHER THAN A PROFESSIONAL CRITIQUE OF THE  
DOMESTIC CONSEQUENCES OF FOREIGN ADVENTURISM. APPEALS  
TO HIS VANITY WILL ALSO MAKE HIM TAKE NOTICE.  
MOREOVER, WE SEE INDICATION THAT MEMBERS OF MUGABE'S  
INNER CIRCLE, WHO HAVE STOLEN AND COMMITTED ATROCITIES,  
ARE WORRIED THAT NOT ONLY WOULD MUGABE NOT TAKE CARE OF  
THEM BUT ACTUALLY WOULD MAKE THEM THE FALL GUYS.  
WILFRED MHANDA OF THE ZIMBABWE LIBERATORS PLATFORM -- A  
SMALL OFFSHOOT OF THE WAR VETERANS' ASSOCIATION THAT  
OPPOSES ZANU-PF'S POLITICIZATION OF THE EX-COMBATANTS --  
TOLD US RECENTLY THAT AIR FORCE COMMANDER PERENCE SHIRI  
HAS MET TWICE WITH HIM TO EXPRESS EXACTLY THOSE FEARS.  
WE ARE INCREASINGLY CONVINCED THAT PEACE IN ZIMBABWE  
WILL NOT BE POSSIBLE WITH ZANU-PF IN ITS CURRENT

ITERATION.

11. (C) HAVING NEUTRALIZED DISSENT WITHIN HIS PARTY, MUGABE TAKES COMFORT FROM THE SUPPORT OF HIS NEIGHBORS. ALTHOUGH PRIVATELY SOME MAY HAVE SPOKEN BLUNTLY TO THE

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ZIMBABWEAN PRESIDENT, PUBLICLY THE CHORUS HAS BEEN ONE OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT, ALBEIT A LUKEWARM ONE, THAT MUGABE IS EMBARKED ON A RIGHTEOUS CRUSADE. SOUTH AFRICA, THE MOST POWERFUL OF THESE IN THE SUB-CONTINENT AND THE ONE TO BE MOST SERIOUSLY AFFECTED BY ZIMBABWE'S ECONOMIC COLLAPSE, HAS TAKEN A CONSCIOUS DECISION TO ENGAGE MUGABE WITH FREQUENT MINISTERIAL AND SUMMIT GATHERINGS. NEVERTHELESS, THE SOUTH AFRICAN PRESIDENT HAS BEEN RELUCTANT TO REMONSTRATE PUBLICLY WITH OR EXACT BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION FROM HIS ZIMBABWEAN SENIOR. RATHER, MBEKI HAS EXTENDED TO ZIMBABWE CREDITS FOR FUEL AND ELECTRICITY, IN ORDER NOT TO ACCELERATE THE ZIMBABWEAN ECONOMY'S COLLAPSE AND PROVOKE A HUMANITARIAN CRISIS THAT WOULD SPILL OVER THE LIMPOPO. ONLY THOSE HEADS OF STATE WHOSE COUNTRIES ARE FAR AWAY FROM HIS, SUCH AS NIGERIA'S OBASANJO, HAVE COME CLOSE TO EXPOSING THE EMPEROR'S NAKEDNESS.

12. (C) IN ANY POLICY INITIATIVE TO CONTAIN SOME OF MUGABE'S EXCESSES WE SHOULD VIEW ZIMBABWE'S NEIGHBORS, SUCH AS SOUTH AFRICA, MOZAMBIQUE AND ZAMBIA, AS OUR ALLIES. ALTHOUGH MUGABE CARES LITTLE WHAT THE WEST THINKS OF HIS POLICIES, HE DOES WISH TO BE SEEN AS A DEMOCRATIC LEADER IN THE WORLD CLUB. HE WISHES TO AVOID THE OPPROBRIUM OF HIS FELLOW AFRICAN HEADS OF STATE, AS HE HAS STAKED HIS CREDIBILITY WITH THEM ON THE QUINTESSENTIALLY AFRICAN, ANTI-COLONIAL CHARACTER OF THE ZIMBABWEAN LAND REFORM EXERCISE. THEIR EFFORTS TO

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ADDRESS MUGABE'S ABUSES OF POWER, PARTICULARLY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY (SADC), MERIT OUR STRONG BACKING, ALTHOUGH WE MUST BEAR IN MIND THAT IN THE END THESE MAY AMOUNT TO LITTLE MORE THAN SYMBOLIC MEASURES.

13. (C) PRESIDENT MUGABE ATTEMPTED TO PROJECT STRENGTH IN THE CONGO AT LEAST PARTIALLY IN ORDER TO THRUST HIMSELF ONTO THE WORLD STAGE AND UPSTAGE THE MUCH-ADULATED NELSON MANDELA -- THE THEN CHAIRMAN OF SADC -- WHO OPPOSED THE INTERVENTION. HIS LACK OF AN EXIT STRATEGY, THE TOLL IN HUMAN LIVES AND TO THE NATIONAL TREASURY OF THE CONTINUING QUAGMIRE, AND HIS LIMITED ABILITY TO INFLUENCE THE UNPREDICTABLE BEHAVIOR OF HIS LATE ALLY, LAURENT KABILA, ARE FACTS THAT SUGGEST THAT HE LAID AN EGG. CONSEQUENTLY, IN SEEMINGLY DESPERATE ATTEMPTS TO CREATE A PALATABLE SOUFFLQ, MUGABE'S SENIOR

MILITARY LEADERSHIP GROWS INCREASINGLY ISOLATED FROM ITS REGIONAL COLLEAGUES. CIVIL SOCIETY VIEWS ITS POLICE AS ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS IN VOTER INTIMIDATION TACTICS AND CIVIL DISTURBANCE BRUTALITY. ZIMBABWE IS NOT A MILITARY DANGER TO ITS NEIGHBORS AND DOES NOT PURSUE A WAR-LIKE FOREIGN POLICY.

14. (C) WE HAVE HEARD THAT THE NEW CONGRESS MAY REVIVE THE ZIMBABWE DEMOCRACY ACT (ZDA) TO CONDEMN THE MUGABE GOVERNMENT. THE 2000 BILL MANDATED A "NO" VOTE BY THE USG IN THE INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND RULED OUT ANY FURTHER GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE OR DEBT RELIEF, BUT OFFERED CARROTS IN THE FORM OF MONEY FOR LAND REFORM. WE SHOULD BE CAREFUL NOT  
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TO SINGLE OUT MUGABE FOR SANCTIONS OR ANY POLICY ACTION THAT COULD BE CONSTRUED AS SUCH AND MAKE HIM A MARTYR. MUGABE WOULD USE ENACTMENT OF THE ZDA TO DIVERT RESPONSIBILITY FROM HIMSELF AND BLAME THE USG FOR ALL OF ZIMBABWE'S MISHAPS AND WOES, A ROLE THE BRITISH NOW HAVE. FOREIGN MINISTER MUDENGE TOLD AMBASSADOR MCDONALD ON JULY 3, 2000 THAT PASSAGE OF THE ACT WOULD PUT ZIMBABWE'S ECONOMY ON A WAR FOOTING, AND THAT ZIMBABWE WOULD LASH OUT AT THE U.S. ANY WAY IT COULD. ALTHOUGH WE WOULD NOT SHRINK FROM CRITICISM, WE MUST BE PREPARED FOR A BACKLASH AND WEIGH THE POSSIBILITY THAT MUGABE COULD BE STRENGTHENED DOMESTICALLY BY OUR ACTIONS.

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NEXT STEPS  
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15. (C) OUR INTERESTS HERE LIE IN HELPING CONTAIN AND REVERSE THE FURTHER EROSION OF DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS, AND AVOID A SOCIAL EXPLOSION OR HUMANITARIAN DISASTER. ZIMBABWEANS AND OTHER CITIZENS OF THE SUB-CONTINENT LOOK TO THE UNITED STATES, AS THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT AND

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PASS USAID FOR A/A/AID D. PRESSLEY, A/AA/AFR V. DICKSON-HORTON, AND AFR/SA C. PALMA

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COHERENT PART OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, TO USE ITS INFLUENCE AND EXERCISE LEADERSHIP IN ORDER TO HALT AND EVEN REVERSE THE CURRENT TREND. OUR INFLUENCE IS LIMITED TO THE USE OF SUASION WITH THIS AND OTHER COUNTRIES' GOVERNMENTS AND IMPLEMENTING PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO MITIGATE CONFLICT AND WEAKEN THE GRIP OF TYRANNY. WORKING WITH THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY, CIVIL SOCIETY, AND THE OPPOSITION WILL BE CRUCIAL TO FULFILLING OUR GOALS. THE RESOURCES WE APPORTION TO THESE WILL SUBSTANTIATE OUR LEADERSHIP.

16. (C) IN OUR OPINION THE USG'S PRINCIPAL BILATERAL POLICY ISSUE WITH ZIMBABWE IS RESTORATION OF THE RULE OF LAW. WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO CONDEMN THE BREAKDOWN OF LAW

AND ORDER, THE ATTACKS ON THE JUDICIARY AND THE PARTISAN USE OF THE SECURITY FORCES. WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO STRESS THAT WE THINK THE ZIMBABWEAN GOVERNMENT IS ACCOUNTABLE FOR VIOLENCE PERPETRATED DURING THE LAND INVASIONS AND POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS BY THE MILITARY, INTELLIGENCE AND POLICE SERVICES. WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO MAKE THE POINT THAT THE AMNESTY ISSUED TO THOSE WHO COMMITTED HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS DURING THIS PERIOD IS, AT A MINIMUM, MORALLY REPUGNANT TO US.

117. (C) WE SHOULD SEND AN UNEQUIVOCAL MESSAGE THAT WE BELIEVE A MORE LEVEL PLAYING FIELD IS NEEDED FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN. WE SHOULD SIGNAL OUR EXPECTATION OF A FREE AND FAIR ELECTION AND PUT THE ZIMBABWEAN  
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GOVERNMENT ON NOTICE THAT THE USG AND, INDEED THE WORLD, WILL WATCH, DOCUMENT, AND EXPOSE AND REJECT AN UNFAIR ELECTION. IT MAY NOT BE TOO BOLD TO SAY THAT IF THE NEXT PRESIDENT IS ELECTED THROUGH VIOLENCE AND INTIMIDATION IT WILL HAVE SERIOUS DIPLOMATIC AND ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES.

118. (C) WE WANT TO CONTINUE TO REMAIN IMPARTIAL IN ASSESSING WHAT IS HAPPENING HERE. IMPARTIALITY SHOULD NOT BE CONFUSED WITH NEUTRALITY. WE SHOULD EMPHASIZE TO THE OPPOSITION AS WELL THAT VIOLENCE IS NOT AN ACCEPTABLE MEANS TO OBTAINING POWER.

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POSSIBLE STRATEGIES  
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119. (C) HOW DO WE BEGIN? WHILE WE KNOW THE NEW ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR AFRICAN AFFAIRS WILL BE EXTREMELY BUSY, WE RECOMMEND AN EARLY VISIT TO ZIMBABWE AMONG OTHER COUNTRIES S/HE MIGHT WISH TO VISIT IN THE REGION. IT WOULD SIGNAL TO THE AMERICAN PUBLIC AND AFRICA THAT THE CONTINENT WILL BE A FOREIGN POLICY PRIORITY AND SEND AN UNEQUIVOCAL MESSAGE THAT THE NEW ADMINISTRATION WILL HAVE TOUGH HUMAN RIGHTS AND GOOD GOVERNANCE STANDARDS WITHOUT WHICH ALL ELSE FAILS. THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY WOULD DELIVER THE MESSAGE THAT WE KNOW WHAT IS GOING ON, WE ARE CONCERNED BY IT AND WE ARE MONITORING CLOSELY THE MUGABE-MADE HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN THE MAKING. SHE/HE ALSO WOULD ASK HOW MUGABE PLANS TO REINSTATE THE RULE OF LAW WHILE AVOIDING HIS  
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SOPHISTIC REASONING THAT IT REALLY DID NOT BREAK DOWN.

120. (C) WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO WORK WITH WESTERN AND FRIENDLY COUNTRIES TO EXPAND THE ISOLATION OF MUGABE AND HIS TOP HENCHMEN. WE SHOULD MAKE IT CLEAR THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS THAT IF GOVERNMENT-DIRECTED VIOLENCE CONTINUES, THERE WILL BE NO REFUGE FOR THESE MEN. WE COULD PLACE VISA AND OTHER TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS ON SENIOR ZANU-PF MEMBERS TOGETHER WITH OTHER NATIONS, ESPECIALLY THE EC. IF WE REALLY WANT TO GO AFTER MUGABE HIMSELF WE COULD ASCERTAIN WHERE HIS ASSETS ARE LOCATED ABROAD AND ASK THOSE COUNTRIES TO FREEZE THEM. THESE MEASURES WOULD PLACE ADDITIONAL PRESSURE ON THE MUGABE GOVERNMENT, HELP SHRINK ITS BASE OF SUPPORT AND SIGNAL INTERNATIONALLY THAT THERE ARE RULES TO THE GAME, THE FLOUTING OF WHICH RESULTS IN PENALTIES.

121. (C) MEASURED ENGAGEMENT WITH THE MILITARY. WE MUST CONTINUE TO BE COGENT IN OUR SELECTION OF TOOLS WITH WHICH TO ENGAGE THE ZIMBABWE DEFENSE FORCES. WHILE WE OUGHT TO REMAIN ENGAGED IN IMET, WE MUST QUESTION THE NEED FOR ANY INITIATIVE, WHICH OFFERS US LIMITED DEGREES

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	VC-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	VCE-00	NSAE-00	SS-00	TRSE-00
	DSCC-00	DRL-02	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/002W		

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8093  
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SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY  
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

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LONDON FOR CHARLES GURNEY

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OF ACCESS AND INFLUENCE, PARTICULARLY IN THE MEDIUM AND LONG TERMS. SHOULD WE DECIDE TO WITHDRAW INCREMENTALLY OUR SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS, THE IMET AND DEMINING PROGRAM SHOULD BE AMONG OUR FINAL ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVES. MOREOVER, LITTLE BENEFIT HAS RESULTED FROM RECENT GENERAL OFFICER VISITS BY MEMBERS OF OUR ARMED FORCES. IN PARALLEL WITH OUR REGIONAL POLITICAL STRATEGY, WE SHOULD ENCOURAGE CIVILIAN DEFENSE OFFICIALS AND SENIOR MILITARY OFFICERS FROM OUR CLOSEST REGIONAL ALLIES WITHIN SADC TO PERSONALLY ADDRESS THE SECURITY CONCERNS OF THE REGION TO ZIMBABWE'S SENIOR CIVILIAN AND MILITARY LEADERSHIP.

122. (C) VIEW ZIMBABWE AS A REGIONAL ISSUE. WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO RAISE THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS THE ISSUE OF VIOLENCE AND GOOD GOVERNANCE WITH THE SADC GOVERNMENTS, AND URGE THEM TO EXERT GREATER PRESSURE ON MUGABE TO ALTER HIS RENEGADE POLICIES. THIS DIALOGUE IN PARTICULAR SHOULD BE GEARED TO GETTING SOUTH AFRICA OFF THE FENCE. WE SHOULD ENGAGE NIGERIAN PRESIDENT OBASANJO -- ONE OF THE FEW HEADS OF STATE WITH REAL INFLUENCE ON MUGABE -- TO PRESS MUGABE ON HONORING THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS AND THE RULE OF LAW. MUGABE MAY ALSO RESPOND TO PRIVATE URGINGS FROM UN SECRETARY GENERAL KOFI ANAN, A FELLOW AFRICAN.

123. (C) ALTHOUGH NOT ALWAYS ON FIRM GROUND, THE UNITED NATIONS PROVIDES ANOTHER PLATFORM FROM WHICH TO SEEK  
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BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION FROM MUGABE. THE UN IS THE MOST VISIBLE INSTITUTION IN WHICH TO CONDEMN HUMAN RIGHTS AND RULE OF LAW ABUSES. WE MIGHT SUGGEST THE UN INVESTIGATE WHO ARE THE BENEFICIARIES OF THE FAST TRACK LAND RESETTLEMENT PROCESS, IF NECESSARY USING THE RUSE OF "SO WE CAN ATTRACT MONEY FROM THE DONORS." UN COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS MARY ROBINSON IS DIALOGUING WITH ZIMBABWE'S HUMAN RIGHTS FORUM, AN INITIATIVE THAT MERITS OUR FULL SUPPORT. IN ADDITION, WE COULD ASK THE UN OR THE SECURITY COUNCIL TO CONDEMN THE BREAKDOWN OF THE RULE OF LAW AND IMPOSE TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS ON ZIMBABWEAN OFFICIALS. SIMPLY CALLING FOR A UN SESSION TO EXAMINE THE ZIMBABWE PROBLEM WOULD EXERT SOME PRESSURE ON MUGABE.

124. (C) THE COMMONWEALTH HAS A ROLE TO PLAY IN HOLDING ZIMBABWE TO CERTAIN STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR. MUGABE RECENTLY APPOINTED FOUR JUDGES WHO, THOUGH COMPETENT PROFESSIONALS ARE CLOSELY IDENTIFIED WITH AND PERSONALLY OWING TO ZANU-PF. MEMBERS OF THE BENCH WHO VALUE THEIR PRESTIGE COME UNDER SCRUTINY BY THEIR RESPECTED COMMONWEALTH PEERS AND WOULD NOT WANT TO RISK OPPROBRIUM FROM THIS CLUB. WE SHOULD SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGE COMMONWEALTH INVOLVEMENT IN THIS REGARD.

125. (C) SUPPORT THE JUDICIARY. THE CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY HAS TAKEN THE LEAD IN PROVIDING ASSISTANCE FOR ZIMBABWE'S EMBATTLED JUDICIARY. USAID'S OFFICE OF TRANSITION INITIATIVES HAS ASSISTED IN COURT CHALLENGES TO ELECTION RESULTS ACHIEVED THROUGH VIOLENCE AND INTIMIDATION. SEEKING REMEDIES IN THE  
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COURTS IS ONE OF THE FEW TOOLS AVAILABLE TO CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE OPPOSITION TO HIT BACK. WHILE THE GOVERNMENT HAS CHOSEN TO IGNORE COURT RULINGS WITH IMPUNITY, THE INTERNATIONAL SPOTLIGHT SHOULD GROW BRIGHTER EACH TIME A RULING IS IGNORED. ESF RESOURCES, WHICH WE HAVE REQUESTED SEPTEL, SHOULD BE ALLOCATED FOR THIS PURPOSE.

126. (C) CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM. CIVIL SOCIETY BELIEVES A NEW CONSTITUTION IS THE ONLY WAY TO GUARANTEE FAIR COMPETITIVE POLITICS, SAFEGUARD DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS,

BALANCE POWER BETWEEN THE THREE BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT,  
AND ENSURE THE PARTICIPATION OF CITIZENS IN DECISION  
MAKING. AGREEMENT ON A NEW CONSTITUTION, TO REPLACE  
BEFORE THE 2002 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION THE LANCASTER  
HOUSE DOCUMENT SIGNED AT INDEPENDENCE, IS SEEN AS  
CRUCIAL TO ENSURING A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD FOR THE  
OPPOSITION POLITICAL PARTIES. WE SHOULD SUPPORT THE  
NATIONAL CONSTITUTIONAL ASSEMBLY AND OTHER CIVIL SOCIETY  
GROUPS IN THEIR EFFORT TO ORGANIZE A NATIONAL  
STAKEHOLDERS CONFERENCE THIS YEAR FOCUSED ON DRAFTING A  
NEW CONSTITUTION, AND BE PREPARED TO ASSIST IN RELATED

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	DSCC-00	DRL-02	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/002W		
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FOLLOW-ON EFFORTS. WE HAVE REQUESTED ESF FOR THIS  
CRITICALLY IMPORTANT ACTIVITY.

127. (C) RADIO FREE ZIMBABWE. THERE IS BROAD AGREEMENT  
AMONG MEMBERS OF CIVIL SOCIETY HERE THAT GOVERNMENT  
CONTROL OF THE AIRWAVES IS THE MOST IMPORTANT CONSTRAINT  
TO BROAD-BASED DEMOCRACY. THAT CONTROL IS BEING  
CHALLENGED IN COURT, BUT THE CONSENSUS IS THAT EVEN IF  
IT LOSES THE GOVERNMENT WILL NOT ALLOW ALTERNATIVE RADIO  
TO HAPPEN BEFORE THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION. WHILE THERE  
ARE INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPERS, MOST OF ZIMBABWE'S  
POPULATION DOES NOT HAVE ACCESS TO THEM OR CANNOT AFFORD  
THEM. WE MAY WANT TO EXPLORE INTEREST WITHIN THE  
INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY FOR FUNDING A RADIO OPERATION  
THAT WOULD CONTINUOUSLY BROADCAST FACTUAL NEWS, DEBATE  
AND ALTERNATIVE VIEWS IN THE LOCAL LANGUAGES.

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DON'T LEAVE THEM ALONE  
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128. (C) ZIMBABWE MATTERS, AND IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE  
TRY TO PRESERVE THE CORNERSTONES OF ITS SOCIETY, WHICH  
INCLUDE A FUNCTIONING PRO-CAPITALIST ECONOMY SUPPORTED  
BY DECENT INFRASTRUCTURE, AN INDEPENDENT AND WELL-  
RESPECTED JUDICIARY, AND THE BEST EDUCATED WORK FORCE IN  
AFRICA. ALTHOUGH OUR LEVERAGE TO INFLUENCE EVENTS HERE  
IS CONSTRAINED, WE HAVE DESCRIBED A NUMBER OF TIMELY AND  
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CREATIVE STEPS THAT WILL SUPPORT THE FORCES OF GOOD  
GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY, WHOSE VOICES ARE  
INCREASINGLY MUFFLED, AND STRENGTHEN DEMOCRATIC  
INSTITUTIONS. IT IS CRUCIAL THAT WE ACT QUICKLY, AS THE  
CONSEQUENCES OF ZIMBABWE'S CONTINUED ECONOMIC DECLINE  
AND ABUSE OF THE RULE OF LAW COULD BE DEVASTATING, BOTH  
FOR THIS "JEWEL OF AFRICA," AS JULIUS NYERERE CALLED IT,  
AND THE SURROUNDING REGION.

IRVING

